

D E T R O I T M A S T E R P L A N

DETROIT CITY PLAN COMMISSION
CITY OF DETROIT

PLANS FOR A FINER CITY...

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LAND USE

STATUS—The generalized land use plan was prepared by the City Plan Commission. Its major provisions were described in a report entitled, The Proposed Generalized Land Use Plan, published in May, 1947. After public hearings the plan was recommended to the Mayor and Common Council with minor revisions, and officially adopted as a part of the Master Plan of the City of Detroit in March, 1948.

Since its original adoption the land use map has been revised from time to time. Precising of expressway routes and other extensive

public and private developments have been the occasion for reconsideration of related land uses. The City Plan Commission considers that continuing revaluation of details of a land use plan is necessary to make appropriate adjustments to changing conditions. The objectives of the plan and general pattern of land use are not affected by these minor adjustments.

For current information maps on file in offices of the City Plan Commission incorporate all changes as they are made.

GENERALIZED PLAN *Land Use*

GENERAL OBJECTIVES OF LAND USE PLAN

Detroit in common with other manufacturing centers has the interdependent problems of disorder and compactness. Industrial plants, homes and stores are so intermixed that each suffers from the interference of the others. Homes suffer from proximity to factories and from industrial traffic flowing through residential streets. Industrial plants have been built in small areas difficult of access and impossible to enlarge. Homes have been built near factories and railroads on sites more suitable for industry.

Concentration of much of the automobile industry and the families of one half million industrial workers into a relatively small area of southeastern Michigan has forced so much of the land of the city into productive use that little open green area has remained for human enjoyment.

These are problems of physical arrangement. The land use plan seeks to find places where all the necessary activities of the city can be carried out, and beginning from the city as it now is, to encourage future building and rebuilding according to a sounder pattern.

Stated briefly, the aims of the land use plan are:

1. To promote neighborhoods and communities by designating areas which are to be cohesive living areas, and showing what facilities or improvements are needed for each.
2. To provide space for industrial growth along industrial corridors, while keeping scattered manufacturing and commercial activities out of residential areas.
3. To encourage development of convenient shopping centers with parking, while salvaging excessive vacant business frontage for other uses.
4. To introduce green areas, to assure all people living within the city of an opportunity for physical recreation and pleasant leisure in the out-of-doors.

DEFINITION AND PRINCIPLES OF APPLICATION

The land use plan is a statement of these objectives on a map in terms of arrangement, area and intensity of development. The land use map shows areas for residential, industrial, commercial, recreational, public and institutional uses along with routes for expressways and thoroughfares.

Recognizing that there are different types of residential structures, the land use plan designates areas suitable primarily for single and two-family houses, terraces or low density multiples, three-story apartments or medium density multiples, and high density multiple apartments.

Recognizing that different industries vary in their requirements and influence on adjacent areas, the land use plan designates some industrial areas as suitable for heavy industry, some for light industry only.

Plan is Generalized

The land use designations are generalized, not detailed. Areas are generalized both in the sense that boundaries are not precisized to property or lot lines; and also in the sense that categories are descriptive of general development, recognizing that some intermixtures are appropriate and permissible.

For example: The land use plan shows a neighborhood in relation to expressways, major thoroughfares, major shopping centers, recreation areas, public service buildings and industry. The plan indicates that in relation to these other factors a given area is fundamentally suited for residential development.

The land use plan does not show in detail for each neighborhood what the street pattern is to be, where the elementary school and playgrounds are to be located, what sites are suitable for stores or for neighborhood shopping centers. Location of schools and playgrounds are, however, shown on other Master Plan maps.

The plan designates a general residential density for the neighborhood, but this designation does not preclude intermixture of some buildings at a lesser or greater density. A neighborhood may be predominantly single family, and yet be zoned to permit terraces along its bounding thoroughfares or around a local shopping center.

Plan is Long Range Goal

The processes of city building are gradual and fragmentary. It may well be that over much less than a century all the single parts or buildings of a city will wear out and be replaced. Nevertheless, these replacements are gradual, and they may take place without changing streets or the basic framework.

The land use plan is a pattern for gradual change and improvement of the city as we know it today. The changes are limited both in extent and in time.

The possibilities for change are limited by the existing pattern of interdependent thoroughfares, industries, railroads and utilities.

Early realization of the changes is often limited by remaining useful life in structures which it is wise to retain for a time in order to realize the residual capital value.

The area south of West Fort Street illustrates the ways in which existing structures serve to limit the plan. That area has such an interdependent structure of rail lines and heavy industry that the removal of either or both is not a real possibility within the time period of this plan. Noise, traffic and airborne effects of these industries so blight the balance of the district that it is not, and can not be made, a good living area. Consequently, the plan shows the whole area south of West Fort as best suited to industrial use.

Despite these liabilities, many homes in that area are sound structures, and have some years of useful life. Where such conditions exist it is the object of the land use plan to encourage industrial development in the area when it is ready for change rather than to cause an immediate changeover.

Plan is Basis for Zoning but not a Zoning Ordinance or a Binding Legal Enactment.

Because of these characteristics the land use plan is to be considered an instrument guiding public officials and private individuals in the day to day decisions which they must make, but it is not a substitute for this continuing process of precisizing and adaptation. Much of the land use plan will be reflected in a revised zoning ordinance which precisizes district boundaries and is a police power regulation of land use.

GENERALIZED PLAN

Explanation of the Map:

The generalized land use map shows the major categories of land use in accordance with the legend on the map. It does not show local business, playgrounds, elementary schools, or community facilities.

It should be noted that the generalized land use map bears an earlier publication date, February 15, 1950, than the other maps included in this publication. This map therefore does not indicate changes which have occurred since that date.

Changes in expressway locations in the recreation plan for major recreation areas, and in residential categories, occurred during the period between publication dates of the generalized land use map and the balance of the book. All such changes have been incorporated in detailed maps. For this reason the detailed maps should be consulted for more recent information. Current information is always available in the offices of City Plan Commission.

SUMMARY OF PUBLIC AREA USES

There are four types of public uses shown in the land use plan:

1. Sites for the Civic Center and for governmental centers in each of the 16 communities.
2. Major recreational areas from the recreation plan. The land use plan shows large parks and playfields, but does not include playgrounds or other purely local recreation space.
3. The Cultural Center, the airport, the State Fair Grounds, and such semi-public sites as golf courses, cemeteries, hospitals and charitable institutions.
4. Thoroughfares and expressways, but no local streets.

INDUSTRIAL AREAS *Land Use*

OBJECTIVES

For Detroit even more than for other cities, industry is the economic reason for the existence of the city. If the city is to prosper as an industrial center, it must offer conditions suitable for industry. These conditions, recognized as the basis for the industrial land use plan are principally:

1. Suitable sites for modern industrial plants with parking, with a margin of area for modernization and expansion.
2. Thoroughfares and rail access so that both workers and materials can move freely to and from the plant without being choked off by residential streets.
3. A plentiful labor supply to be secured by having the city an attractive place in which workers are happy to live and work.

THE PATTERN OF THE INDUSTRIAL PLAN

The pattern of major industry in Detroit is formed by the railroads and their belt lines. The planning problems raised by industry are not so much with this basic framework as with the contact and the intermixture of homes with industry along the borders of the industrial corridors.

The land use plan utilizes this established pattern and shows

where its fringes should be rationalized. With the present development of the city the most effective steps that can be taken over the next decades are to:

1. Further separate industry and homes, keeping heavy industry at the core of the industrial belts and lighter industry along the outer edges.
2. Establish buffers and open areas between industry and homes so as to reduce the effect of industrial noise or wind-born nuisances.
3. Widen thoroughfares and route expressways along industrial corridors to handle industrial traffic and keep it off residential streets.

FACTORS GOVERNING THE PATTERN

Availability of sites large enough to meet the needs of typical modern industrial plants is a central governing factor in determining areas for industrial development. The typical new Detroit industrial plant is a single-storied plant extending over a large ground area. New plants have been built where area is available for employee parking and for future expansion.

Since these conditions are most readily met on tracts of vacant acreage, much recent industrial development has gone outside the city.

The land use plan shows where these conditions can be provided in industrial corridors within the city if a sufficient margin of vacant land can be reserved or restored for industrial purposes. Within the corridors, a few acreage sites along rail lines remain in the city and can be protected for industrial purposes by zoning.

In the older portions of the city, the industrial corridor includes area which now contains a mixture of houses, industry and commerce. Some form of municipal aid in assembling these areas and clearing them is necessary if the conditions for sound industrial development are to be met.

EXPLANATION OF THE MAP

Dark blue areas in the map are those recommended for heavy industry in the plan. Light blue areas are recommended for light industrial use.

COMMERCIAL AREAS *Land Use*

OBJECTIVES

Striking changes in recent years in the size and distribution of retail stores raise several problems for urban areas which have been platted and partially developed according to an older pattern.

By providing off-street parking, food and department stores have been able to increase the size and trading area of local shopping centers. In the emerging pattern there are developing fairly large or major business centers with a tributary area ranging from four neighborhoods to a whole community, i.e., 40,000 persons to 150,000 persons.

These major business centers are composed of department stores, apparel shops, specialty goods stores, food stores, banks, utility offices and frequently a movie house and other entertainment places. While the commercial buildings in typical centers occupy from four to six acres of land, experience with parking in some centers indicates that at least twice the ground area of the buildings is needed to meet the need for parking. Consequently, some means of deepening the frontage of present platting to get suitable space for parking must be discovered. In newly developing centers this space can frequently be found. In older centers, clearance of nearby houses may be necessary.

The pattern of retail trading is still in transition, but it is not anticipated that all types of commercial activity will gravitate to major centers. The exceptions can be grouped roughly into two types:

1. Neighborhood stores within walking distance of homes which they serve. These neighborhood stores may themselves be grouped in small centers or may remain as isolated stores in strip business frontage.
2. Automobile sales rooms, undertaking establishments, repair shops, printing shops, wholesale distributors, very light industry, and similar general commercial activities which ordinarily locate on major streets but not in high rental centers.

To meet the new needs of commerce the commercial land use plan has the following objectives:

1. Encourage grouping of stores in centers where off-street parking can be provided.
2. Encourage an economically sound distribution pattern for major business centers by showing locations of 40 present

and potential centers which together offer a good distribution pattern.

3. Prevent unnecessary scattering of commercial activities by limiting commercial frontage in sound relationship to the anticipated requirements.

DEFINITION AND LIMITING FACTORS OF THE PLAN

The commercial land use plan shows two categories of commercial use:

1. Major business centers giving general indication of the area needed for buildings and off-street parking.
2. General commercial frontage along major thoroughfares, suitable for business, warehouse and some light industrial activities.

The location of purely local or neighborhood shopping is not shown on the land use plan, because these local needs can best be determined as part of the process of planning neighborhood improvements.

The major business centers concentrate in one place the specialized stores and services which require a large population to support them.

Of the major business centers shown on the land use map, the majority already exist, either as developing or built up centers. Most of these older centers have very little off-street parking space. Action to secure parking and improve these centers is needed if they are to maintain their competitive position. Since these centers are usually surrounded by homes, high costs of acquisition and clearance present the principal obstacles to improvement.

The locations for new and developing centers generally have vacant land available for off-street parking. The City Plan Commission is co-operating with developers to work out the pattern of parking and traffic movements, and is recommending necessary zoning changes to permit sound development.

EXPLANATION OF THE MAP

The areas indicated in dark red on the map are locations recommended as major business centers. Light red areas indicate frontage suitable for general commercial use.

RESIDENTIAL AREAS *Land Use*

OBJECTIVES

The residential land use plan has two principal objectives:

1. To designate those areas which can be built up and maintained as good places to live.
2. To guide their growth so that they will be good and stable living areas.

Even those neighborhoods which have been protected from outside nuisances such as traffic or industrial noise and dirt may be blighted by having too many houses and people crowded into them. The land use plan seeks to limit the number of people who will live in any given neighborhood.

The number of families in each neighborhood is governed by the types of residential structures which are permitted, and by the yard requirements for each type of building.

For single homes, row houses and apartments there are limits of crowding beyond which all buildings suffer by loss of the light and air circulation. The land use plan sets a density standard and designates areas suitable for each, preventing intermixture unless with a well worked out pattern.

FACTORS GOVERNING THE PATTERN

Planning for residential areas is complicated by a pattern of growth and decay in which new houses are built in a widening circle at the fringe while deterioration and blight are destroying the city from its core. It is the ambition of each generation to start new in the suburbs, while the fine homes and community values of the previous generation are abandoned.

The land use plan conceives the residential areas of the city as a group of communities, each stable, maintaining and revitalizing its characteristic living values in each generation. The plan seeks to make each community one in which people will want to live for its inherent advantages generation after generation.

Some parts or neighborhoods of the city are now so badly deteriorated that they must be cleared entirely and rebuilt. However sound the economics of this rebuilding may be for areas already blighted beyond reclamation, the residential land use plan is based on the premise that it is sounder economy to build homes and neighborhoods in a way that wholesale rebuilding can be avoided. When there can be assurance of continuity in community values, each new generation will have some encouragement to remain, to build and rebuild upon the values already created.

The inducements for young couples to settle and revitalize an older community must be tangible physical assets. On the one hand, the community must have well maintained community facilities in schools, playgrounds, public meeting halls, shopping centers and theatres. Probably as significant, it must have a variety of dwellings suited to varying human needs—apartments for relatively young or old couples without children as well as single family homes for growing families.

For this reason, the land use plan recommends a balanced distribution of dwelling types in all communities. On the assumption that apartments and terraces are desirable for their convenience at points where cultural and social activities are concentrated, the plan shows areas for multiple development around the shopping centers and public centers in each community.

The plan recognizes that many people find it desirable to live near the metropolitan centers such as the cultural center, the central business district or beauty spots of the region on the riverfront. For this reason, the land use plan shows a greater concentration of apartments and terraces for these areas than other communities. Apartment sites are shown as suitable for apartments up to 60 units per acre. Much of the two older communities within the Boulevard where rebuilding is necessary are shown as having an average density, after rebuilding, of 20 to 30 units per acre.

STANDARDS OF RESIDENTIAL DENSITY

The residential land use plan shows four categories of residential land:

1. Single family areas consisting of predominantly one and two family structures.
2. Low density multiple areas, containing row houses and apartments with a two story limit.
3. Medium density multiple areas, consisting predominantly of apartment structures with a three story limit.
4. High density multiple areas with no direct height limitation.

For each type of structure, the Master Plan recommends standards of density, based on measurable limits of crowding, beyond which it is known that buildings will encroach on the light, air and circulation of neighboring buildings.

These standards are stated in terms of dwelling units per acre. Since it is recognized that the number of rooms per dwelling may

materially affect the total volume of an apartment structure, these standards have been adjusted to keep the relationship of total rooms to lot area constant for any given type of structure.

For example: 40 two-room dwelling units per net acre occupy 550 square feet of lot area per room. If the dwellings are reduced to one room units, the number of dwellings may be increased to 80 without changing the ratio of room to ground area, or materially changing the volume of the whole structure. Similarly, if the size of dwellings is increased to three room units, the total number of dwellings must be reduced to 25.

The following table sets the Master Plan standards for the maximum number of dwellings per net acre which should be permitted for a given building type. For this purpose, only living rooms and bedrooms are counted.

BUILDING TYPE	Maximum Units Per Net Acre					Lot Area in Square Feet	
	1-Room Units	2-Room Units	3-Room Units	4-Room Units	5-Room Units	Per Unit	Per Room
One-Family	7	7	7	7	7	6,000	—
Two-Family	12	12	12	12	12	3,600	—
Low-Density Multiple (2-Story limit)	58	29	20	15	12	—	750
Medium-Density Multiple (3-Story limit)	80	40	25	20	16	—	550
High-Density Multiple (Unlimited height)	125	60	42	31	25	—	350

Using this chart to interpret the map, the first two building types are considered to be the predominant structures in the single family districts. Two-story structures are predominant in low density multiple areas; three-story structures in medium density multiple areas; and unlimited height structures in high density multiple areas.

EXPLANATION OF THE MAP

Light brown on the map indicates those areas which are suitable to predominantly single-family use. Light brown hatch indicates areas suitable for low density or two-story multiple use. Cross hatch indicates areas for medium or three-story multiples. Solid brown indicates areas suitable for high density multiple structures.

Medium and high density multiple areas shown on the map include both vacant parcels suitable for multiple development and some developed or partially developed areas which, because of special factors of desirable location may be suitable for ultimate rebuilding.

NEIGHBORHOOD UNIT PATTERN *Land Use*

NEIGHBORHOODS AND COMMUNITIES

The structure of the city is more complicated than a map of undifferentiated streets suggests.

Although there is no particular form or pattern suggested by a view down an apparently endless street of houses, the city's homes are grouped together around schools, shopping centers, churches and other centers of local interest. These groupings sometimes take on place names by which an area is designated: Redford, Delray or Corktown. The designations may be deeply rooted in historic usage, or they may be names recently coined to designate a subdivision.

Similarly, the local areas may have well defined geographic limits such as a park, a highway, an industrial belt, a cemetery or other open space which breaks the continuity of the living area. On the other hand subdivisions may, as in northwest Detroit, merge into each other and extend for miles without any perceptible break in the pattern.

Recognition and more precise designation of these local groupings is accepted in the Detroit Master Plan as valid and useful:

The neighborhoods and communities form a framework for determining the need and location of schools, playgrounds and other local facilities.

Identification of local areas has the further social purpose of encouraging social organization within them, and of fostering a sense of common interests and purposes.

For the purpose of designating residential areas in the city, the City Plan Commission uses the term *neighborhood* for the area, usually a square mile or less, which serves as an elementary school district. A group of neighborhoods forming a high school district is referred to as a *community*.

DEFINITION, AREA, NUMBER OF PEOPLE, BOUNDARIES

In the development of the Master Plan, the City Plan Commission has recognized that the heavily traveled surface thoroughfares are in fact formidable barriers to pedestrian movements of children and adults. For this reason, it was determined that these major thoroughfares should be used generally as *neighborhood* and elementary school district boundaries so that each neighborhood can be made an area within which pedestrian movement is relatively unbroken and safe.

Since the major thoroughfares for outlying areas occur at one mile intervals, and for inner areas somewhat closer, use of these thoroughfares as *neighborhood* boundaries generally leave a physical area one square mile or less.

A square mile, under current subdivision practice, and providing adequate space for schools, playgrounds and stores, contains area adequate for 3,000 to 3,600 homes. While the area for neighborhoods in the heart of the city is smaller, population density is generally higher so that the population per neighborhood is approximately the same.

From 2,500 to 3,500 families, there are normally 1,000 to 1,400 children of elementary school age of whom approximately 80% attend public school. This number is considered a satisfactory size for operation of a six-grade elementary school in Detroit.

The residential area of Detroit delineated on this basis emerges as 150 *neighborhoods* or elementary school districts.

RELATION TO OTHER ELEMENTS OF THE MASTER PLAN

Since major thoroughfares are used generally as neighborhood boundaries, the neighborhood is in a sense a residual area lying

between trafficways; in a more positive sense it is a residential island served by thoroughfares or expressways running along its borders. Neighborhoods are occasionally traversed by secondary thoroughfares carrying DSR coach lines, but through-traffic is otherwise unnecessary and to be generally discouraged from passing through the neighborhood.

The neighborhood as a residential area is to be protected from industrial or commercial activities except those of incidental service to the neighborhood.

FACILITIES SERVING THE NEIGHBORHOOD

As a group of families, each neighborhood needs certain services and facilities. Some by their nature should be provided within the neighborhood. Others may be accessible along adjacent thoroughfares.

Schools and playground to be used by small children must be accessible within the distance they can walk in reasonable safety. The Master Plan specifies that each neighborhood should have an elementary school with a five to seven acre central playground. In addition four smaller playgrounds within the four quadrants are needed to serve the younger children.

Near the neighborhood, there should be a shopping center, library, intermediate school and 30 to 40 acre playfield. Also accessible to the neighborhood should be such community facilities as public service offices, a large park and high school.

EXPLANATION OF THE MAP

In the Detroit Master Plan there are 150 neighborhoods. On the maps of elementary schools, neighborhood centers, playgrounds, each neighborhood is designated by a letter and the community number. For example, the neighborhood bounded by Wyoming, Seven Mile, Livernois, McNichols is designated as "10 f."

The facilities within each neighborhood are also numbered. Number "1" is generally reserved for the elementary school, recreation center and central playground which occupy the same site. The Bagley school site in the above neighborhood, which is now used as a neighborhood recreation center and playground, is designated "10 f 1."

THE COMMUNITY PATTERN *Land Use*

A shopping center with a weekly newspaper exists primarily as a commercial relationship, but the community newspaper often becomes a spokesman for other aspirations of the community. Women's clubs, luncheon clubs, service organizations and community councils often become the instruments through which local identity and interests are expressed.

The boundaries of the community are usually physical barriers or open spaces such as large parks, industrial corridors or expressways. Community boundaries have been located to give maximum recognition to those major physical obstructions and separations which are already present in the city. Similarly, the plan attempts to keep the community itself, a compact residential area unbroken by major physical separators.

Potential population of the communities designated in the Master Plan ranges from 50,000 to 150,000 persons.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER ELEMENTS OF THE PLAN

The community is a compact residential area which is provided with all necessary commercial and governmental facilities, but protected from heavy industry and similar activities which might impair it as a living area.

In order to have opportunities for employment near each community and reduce the necessity for long trips to work, the land use plan has been drawn so that there is an industrial corridor along the borders of or near each community. Similarly, it is desirable to have large parks within twenty minutes travel time of all homes. Consequently, the large parks have generally been placed along the borders of the communities.

Expressways have been routed, insofar as possible, in the corridors between communities where they can give ready access to all other communities in the metropolitan area.

PUBLIC SERVICE FACILITIES WITHIN THE COMMUNITY

According to the plan, each community has high and intermediate schools, playfields and other recreation facilities, libraries, shopping and other public and private facilities needed by its people.

Some facilities such as the high schools and administrative offices

serve the whole community. In a central location usually adjacent to the major shopping center, the plan shows a location suitable for grouping public service offices and buildings. These minor civic centers are considered suitable locations not only for municipal services such as health, welfare and police stations, but also for employment services, post offices, branch offices of the Secretary of State and similar services operated by county, state or federal government.

The locations for minor civic groups are near intersections of thoroughfares where they will be most accessible to the whole community. Generally, they are adjacent to the principal shopping center of the community.

Sites designated for minor groups are areas large enough to accommodate three or four public buildings together with parking.

Facilities such as the intermediate school, playfield, branch library, and the shopping center usually have a service radius smaller than an entire community. Since the intermediate school, playfield and library usually serve four neighborhoods, it has frequently been possible to pick locations where these facilities can be conveniently near each other.

EXPLANATION OF THE MAP

In the Detroit Master Plan, there are sixteen communities. For convenience, the communities are numbered from 1 to 16.

Facilities within each community, except neighborhood facilities, are designated by two numbers separated by a hyphen: "2-6." The first numeral refers to the community in which the facility is located. The second distinguishes the site of facilities within the community.

Since schools and playgrounds frequently have locations in common, designations for school and recreational facilities on the same sites are the same on all maps. For example, a playfield and swimming pool are proposed adjacent to Jefferson intermediate school. Consequently, these locations are considered to be a single site and are designated "2-2" on all maps.

However, the designation "2-2" on a fire, police or water facility map would not refer to the same site.

In general, the suffix 1 has been reserved for a community civic center site. For example, "5-1," "6-1," and "7-1" indicate sites which are within a governmental center on the land use map.

DEFINITIONS, SIZE, BOUNDARIES

The *community* in the Detroit Master Plan is a grouping of six to twelve neighborhoods to form a residential area which is more or less self-contained with respect to every day life and services for its inhabitants. It forms an administrative unit for those services of government which can be decentralized into branch offices. The community also forms the service district of a high school.

The plan gives a more explicit definition to divisions of the city which today are recognizable physical entities and which contain special forces binding them together.

The high school, the public library and other decentralized services of government operate within definable geographic areas and their names are frequently used to designate that part of the city.